

ABSTRACT

One approach to treating individuals infected with HIV-1 is to administer to such individuals compounds that directly interfere with and intervene in the machinery by which HIV-1 replicates itself within human cells. Although the specific role of HIV-1 viral protein Vif in the viral life cycle is not known, the *vif* gene is essential for the pathogenic replication of lentiviruses *in vivo*. The present invention relates to a method for treating an individual exposed to or infected with HIV-1. Individuals identified as being exposed to or infected by HIV-1 are administered a therapeutically effective amount of one or more compounds that inhibit or prevent replication of said HIV-1 by interfering with the replicative or other essential functions of HIV-1 viral protein *Vif*, by interactively blocking the multimerization domain of Vif, thereby preventing multimerization of Vif protein, which is important for Vif function in the lentivirus life cycle. In preferred embodiments, the compound or compounds that interactively block the multimerization domain of Vif are Vif antagonists. Pharmaceutical compositions comprising these compounds are also disclosed.